



COMMANDER
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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 23 Holds Change of Command

SAN DIEGO (NNS) -- Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 23 held a change of command ceremony at Naval Air Station North Island in Coronado, Calif., June 5.

At the ceremony, Cmdr. Stephen O. Johnson of Lynchburg, Va., relieved Cmdr. Jennifer K. Wilderman of St. Charles, Mo., as the commanding officer of the "Wildcards" of HSC-23.

Friends and family of the 47 officers and 215 enlisted Sailors of HSC-23 were in attendance at the ceremony, which celebrated Wilderman's successful leadership during the squadron's three outstanding deployments aboard USS Peleliu (LHA-5), USS Makin Island (LHD-8), and USS McClusky (FFG-41) and numerous training detachments at various locations, including El Centro, Calif.; Las Vegas; and Tucson, Ariz.

Prior to being relieved of command, Wilderman told the "Wildcards" to continue their tradition of excellence and to lead the community as the finest squadron in the Navy. Wilderman's next tour of duty will be with Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command in Point Loma, Calif.

Johnson will be the seventh commanding officer of the "Wildcards."

Prior to assuming command of HSC-23, Johnson previously served as the squadron's executive officer for 15 months and completed sea tours with Helicopter Combat Support Squadron (HC) 8 and HSC-28. Johnson also served as the "Mini Boss" onboard USS Tarawa (LHA-1). Throughout his sea tours, Johnson completed deployments to the Western Pacific, Arabian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea.

Johnson's shore tours include positions at HC-3, Air Command and Staff College, and Helicopter Sea Assignments Officer in Millington, Tenn. While at the Bureau of Naval Personnel, he completed a 14 month individual augmentee assignment to Afghanistan.

Johnson holds a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Virginia Military Institute and a Master of Arts in Military Operational Arts from the Air Command and Staff College.

Cmdr. Dewon Chaney, a native of Atlanta, serves as the executive officer of HSC-23.

HSC-23 is permanently based at Naval Air Station North Island with a mission to maintain and operate 10 Sikorsky MH-60S helicopters and prepare for and deploy helicopter detachments onboard Pacific Fleet ships conducting search and rescue, special operations support, anti-surface warfare, humanitarian relief and logistics for both Carrier Strike Groups and Amphibious Ready Groups.

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